

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center

208 West 13th Street (aka 206-218 West 13th Street), Manhattan
Tax Map Block 617, Lot 47

Built: c. 1869 (center); c. 1879, 1887 (additions)

Architect: Ammon Macvey, Superintendent of Public School Buildings; Thomas R. Jackson and William H. Wilcox (additions)

Style: Italianate

Action: Calendared May 14, 2019; Public Hearing June 4, 2019



LGBT Community Center, LPC, 2019

For more than 30 years this former school building in Greenwich Village has been a focal point for the LGBT community in New York City. The Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender Community Center acquired the three-story Italianate-style former school from the City of New York in 1984. In the decades since, it has welcomed hundreds of community groups to host meetings, celebrations, workshops, cultural events, mental health and social service programs.

The Center has played a key role in supporting the rights, health, and wellness of the LGBT community for 35 years. Six original tenant organizations occupied The Center in 1984, including Partnership for the Homeless, S.A.G.E., Metropolitan Community Church, and The Community Health Project, the nation's first community-based HIV clinic. The Center partnered with a variety of groups in an effort to educate a broader public to the health issues facing the LGBT community; one partnership included contributing 1200 panels to the AIDS memorial quilt with the organization Heritage of Pride. The Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights used the building as a meeting place in the 1980s, and played a critical role in winning approval of the 1986 New York City law banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Over the course of its history other prominent groups have gathered at the LGBT Community Center, including Gay and Lesbian Youth, the Lesbian Switchboard, Dignity/New York, Asian Lesbians of the East Coast, Harvey Milk High School, Salsa Soul Sisters, Survivors of Transsexuality Anonymous, and the Gender Identity Project.

Located on the south side of West 13th Street, mid-block between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, the LGBT Community Center is part of the Greenwich Village Historic District, designated in April 1969. Erected as Public School No.16 (later Grammar School No. 17), the building was substantially enlarged c. 1879 and c.1897. Prior to the Center's purchase of the building it had most recently been used by the Food and Maritime Trade Vocational High School.

Facade restoration and interior renovations have been carried out by the Center during its more than three decades in the building, including a major renovation in 2001 by Francoise Bollack Architects. This work has furthered the Center's mission in the community and upgraded the building to meet safety and code requirements. Since its inception the Center continues to provide services and act as a gathering place, empowering and building a stronger LGBT community in NYC. Today it is home to an archival collection, arts and cultural programing, young adult programs, and career services dedicated to the LGBT community.



208 West 13th Street
ca. 1940, NYC Tax
Photograph

